

NEWS RELEASE

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Mayor opens IPIC learning labs at city parks for convenient training for job seekers

Mayor Bart Peterson today visited Christian Park to officially open one of five community learning labs – three of which are in city parks – for job seekers who want to hone basic skills, such as math and reading.

The labs have been set up by the Indianapolis Private Industry Council Inc. to help job seekers test and acquire common skills required for all jobs and to résumé-writing and other job-search tools. In addition to the three city parks – Christian, Municipal Gardens and Rhodius – labs also are located at two community centers.

Here's a list of locations and hours of operation:

Christian Park	4200 English Ave.	1-4 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday
Municipal Gardens	1831 Lafayette Road	Noon-4 p.m. Monday through Friday
Rhodius Park	1720 W. Wilkins St.	1-6 p.m. Monday through Friday
Oasis of Hope Community Development Corp./New Bridges Apartments	2372 Beckwith Drive	10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Monday 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday
Jobs Partnership of Greater Indianapolis	3549 Boulevard Place	9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Friday

IPIC has provided each lab with \$18,000 in equipment: eight laptop computers; a server; a printer; and an LCD projector. The computers are equipped with KeyTrain™ software, a comprehensive job-training curriculum. Its lessons are based on WorkKeys®, a job-skills assessment system that measures real-world skills.

The learning labs will allow individuals to brush up on their skills before undergoing WorkKeys assessments, which are given at WorkOne centers throughout the state, including the six overseen by IPIC in Marion County.

“We’ve always considered the parks to be gathering places for city residents to pursue recreation, leisure and education,” Peterson said. “This partnership with IPIC makes the parks even more valuable to our citizens and adds a new dimension to the educational aspect of what they do.”

Said Joyce: “We were thrilled that the city was amenable to our idea to place learning laboratories in three of its parks, supplementing the services we offer at the city’s six WorkOne centers. This allows us to be open in more places and during more hours.”

Each site agreed to provide an instructor who assists job seekers with accessing computer tutorials. But budget cuts by the city made that difficult, so IPIC has partnered with AARP, which has arranged for a member to staff the learning lab at each of the three city parks. That person’s salary is paid by a grant AARP received through the federal Older Americans Act to train seniors in the skills of today’s jobs.

“As they help job seekers use the learning labs, the AARP staffers will be learning customer service and information technology. And they can access the KeyTrain programs to update other skills too,” Joyce said. “This partnership benefits both the AARP staffers and the job seekers they assist.”

In May 2003, the Indiana General Assembly directed federal Reed Act money to be used to conduct WorkKeys assessments of the skills of at least 30,000 Hoosiers over five years. Those assessments began in February 2004, and nearly 30,000 individuals have participated.

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